/40 cont./

173 643 648 According to the tradition of the Thailand Meau, as my informants told me, their last king waged war against the Chinese because the latter menaced the Meau settlements. After the initial successes of the royal commander-in-chief, tă lĕn tĕŭ, the Meau were nevertheless beaten. The king and his military leaders died in the bloody battle. Then the younger brother of the slain king assumed leadership. He led all the people southward on the flight before the pursuing enemy. -- The present-day Meau in Thailand no longer re- 643 member the kingship in detail. It could not be learned, for instance, whether the crown was customarily passed on to the son or to the brother of the deceased. Only the designation ● 668 for king - văn tsŏ has survived. Even today they believe that 643 sometime and somewhere a Meau king will rise again, who will unite his people, gather them together, and lead them victoriously against the hated oppressors. Savina (1) describes

1. II, p. 258.

similar ideas from among the Meau in Indochina: "The Meau are waiting for a liberator, a king, a phoa thay. As soon as the report of a phoa thay comes from somewhere, they immediately take up their weapons and set out to put themselves at his disposal. What we call a 'rebellion' they call oa phoa thay, 'to make a king.'"

173 634 Far more vivid, however, is the memory of the Meau concerning the power and activity of the great chiefs (tšŭń kŏăń). One of my informants in particular knew all kinds of details; he was a direct descendant of the last great chief. The memory of the great chief, however, /41/ was also alive among the other Meau and in any case was more vivid than that of the king, since the common man probably scarcely had an opportunity to know the king himself except by hearsay.